

REMARKS

Claims 1-66 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-63 have been rejected.

Claims 10, 17, 37, 44, 55, and 62 have been amended. Claims 64-66 have been added.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 3, 6-9, 19-21, 28, 30, 33-36, 46, 48, and 51-54 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by “Request for Comments 2866: RADIUS Accounting” (hereinafter referred to as “RFC 2866”). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The cited art fails to anticipate, teach or suggest “providing a session identifier to an off-load server,” as recited in claim 1. As noted on page 10 of the specification, an off-load server is “any device that is capable of establishing a network connection using PPP or any other known protocol.” An off-load server “off-loads” network connection functionality (e.g., PPP functionality) from the NAS to a separate server, as described in the specification: “A recent architectural evolution has produced the result that wholesale providers are re-designing their hardware configuration such that the PPP session is not administered by the NAS 28. Instead, the PPP protocol software resides on the off-load server 200. The off-load server 200 provides PPP service for the NAS device 28.” Specification, p. 10.

The Examiner cites section 2.3 (Applicant assumes that the Examiner is referring to section 2.1, since there is no section 2.3 in RFC 2866) and section 5.5 of RFC 2866 as teaching “providing a session identifier to an off-load server.” Office Action, p. 2. In the rejection, the Examiner equates the “forwarding server” taught in RFC 2866 with the “off-load server” recited in claim 1. The forwarding server is used in Proxy RADIUS. “The forwarding server logs the accounting request (if desired), adds its Proxy-State (if desired) after any other Proxy-State attributes, updates the Request Authenticator, and forwards the request to the remote server.” RFC 2866 p. 4. Thus, the forwarding server described in RFC 2866 is a server that operates as a proxy according to the RADIUS protocol.

As described above, a forwarding server simply forwards a RADIUS request from the NAS to a remote server. In contrast to a forwarding server, an off-load server administers a

network connection between a user and a client server for a NAS. Thus, instead of simply modifying and forwarding a RADIUS request, as is done by the forwarding server in RFC 2866, an off-load server generates messages and administers a user's network connection to a client server dependent upon the responses received to those messages. As an example, an off-load server that performs PPP services can generate messages such as an authentication request, an accounting START record, and an accounting STOP record while also processing messages, such as accept response messages, in order to determine whether to allow a user to establish a PPP session with a client server (e.g., see operations 4-6 of FIG. 4 and the accompanying description in the specification). No teaching or suggestion has been provided in RFC 2866 (or any other cited reference) that a forwarding server, as described in RFC 2866, is an off-load server. Accordingly, RFC 2866 fails to teach or suggest "providing a session identifier to an off-load server." For at least this reason, claim 1 is patentable over the cited art.

Claims 3 and 6-9 are patentable for at least the foregoing reasons by virtue of their dependence upon claim 1. Claims 19-21, 28, 30, 33-36, 46, 48, and 51-54 are patentable for similar reasons to those given above with respect to claim 1.

Claims 10-12, 37-39, and 55-57 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by "Request for Comments 2867: RADIUS Accounting Modifications for Tunnel Protocol Support" (hereinafter referred to as "RFC 2867"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The cited art fails to anticipate, teach, or suggest, "determining whether the session identifier value is provided by an access server to an offload server; and assigning, if the session identifier value is not provided by the access server, the session identifier value," as recited in amended claim 10. The Examiner cites page 2, section 2 of RFC 2867, which recite:

In auditing, the User-Name, Acct-Tunnel-Connection, Tunnel-Client-Endpoint and Tunnel-Server-Endpoint attributes are typically used to uniquely identify the call, allowing the Accounting-Request sent by the NAS to be reconciled with the corresponding Accounting-Request sent by the tunnel server.

The Examiner also cites section 4.1 of RFC 2867, which recites in part:

[The Acct-Tunnel-Connection] Attribute indicates the identifier assigned to the tunnel session. It SHOULD be included in Accounting-Request packets which contain an Acct-Status-Type attribute having the value Start, Stop or any of the values described above. This attribute, along with the Tunnel-Client-Endpoint and Tunnel-Server-Endpoint attributes [3], may be used to provide a means to uniquely identify a tunnel session for auditing purposes.

The above-quoted sections of RFC 2867 describe how tunnel sessions can be identified and how identifying information can be used to reconcile accounting requests generated by a tunnel server and a NAS. As described in RFC 2866, accounting requests are RADIUS requests that are provided to an accounting server (e.g., see section 1 of RFC 2866). The cited portions of the reference make no mention of an off-load server, nor do these portions of the reference teach or suggest determining whether a session ID has been provided to such an off-load server. Furthermore, given that the cited sections of RFC 2867 are concerned with tunnel session identifiers used in accounting requests that are provided to an accounting server (as opposed to an off-load server), no such teachings or suggestions would be expected. Accordingly, claim 10 is patentable over the cited art. Claims 11-12, which depend from claim 10, are also patentable over the cited art for at least the foregoing reasons. Claims 37-39 and 55-57 are patentable over the cited art for similar reasons.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2, 4-5, 29, 31-32, 47, and 49-50 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over RFC 2866 in view of RFC 2867. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 2, 4-5, 29, 31-32, 47, and 49-50 are patentable over the cited art for reasons similar to those provided above with respect to claims 1, 28, and 46. To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 U.S.P.Q. 580 (C.C.P.A. 1974), MPEP § 2143.03. As noted above, neither reference teaches or suggests providing a session ID to an off-load server. Furthermore, the combination of the references fails to overcome this deficiency, since the combination of the references also fails to teach or suggest providing a session ID to an off-load server.

Claims 13-18, 22, 40-45, and 58-63 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over RFC 2867 in view of RFC 2866. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 13-18, 22, 40-45, and 58-63 are patentable over the cited art for reasons similar to those provided above with respect to claims 10, 19, 37 and 55. As noted above, the references

neither teach nor suggest determining whether a session ID has been provided by an access server to an off-load server. The combination of the references also fails to teach or suggest determining whether a session ID has been provided to an off-load server. Accordingly, claims 13-18, 22, 40-45, and 58-63 are patentable over the cited art.

Added Claims

Claims 64-66 have been added. These claims, which depend from claim 1, are patentable for at least the foregoing reasons provided above with respect to claim 1. Support for these claims can be found in the specification on page 10, line 3 through page 11, line 13, as well as on page 13, line 24 through page 14, line 29.

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application and the claims therein are believed to be in condition for allowance without any further examination and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 512-439-5087.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on February 8, 2005.



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